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Tested were certain measures of creativity and self concept in middle (M-group) and lower (L-group) social classes. It was hypothesized that: (1) L-group subjects (Ss) would have lower self concept than M-group Ss; (2) the greater the discrepancy between actual and ideal self, the greater possibility of low self concept; (3) L-group Ss would tend to be more creative; and (4) those who are more fluent, flexible, original, and elaborate are also likely to be more creative. Forty Ss were given the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, Figural Form A, and a specially developed Self-Referent questionnaire. The major finding of the study is that the L-group scored higher on all aspects of creativity than the M-group. One possible explanation is that middle class children live in a more highly structured milieu than do lower class children. Therefore, the lower class child has the opportunity to develop his creativity through the nature of his unstructured play. (NH)

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Analyses of Certain Measures Of Creativity And Self-Concept and Their Relationships to Social Class

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, several papers concerned with the topic of creativity have been written.* Creativity, seen as independent of conventional intelligence, is a definite aspect of intellectual functioning (Guilford, 1950; Getzels and Jackson, 1962; Torrance, 1962). It is dependent upon unique cognitive factors (Guilford, 1950; Lowenfield, 1958) and is directly related to certain personality traits (Barron, 1955; Drevdahl and Cattell, 1958; Couch and Keniston, 1960; McGuire et al, 1961; Anderson and Cropley, 1966). Moreover, creativity greatly involves the type of activity Guilford (1950) referred to as "divergent thinking" and may be characterized by its dependence on "fluency, flexibility and originality" (Torrance, 1962, p. 72) and thus is seen as separate from conventional intelligence.

The purpose of this study is to test certain measures of creativity and self-concept in middle and lower social classes. A series of hypotheses were made on past research in this area. First, (1) lower class persons have lower self-concepts than middle class persons. Lower class children tend to underestimate their abilities in school and thus form low self-concepts (Brookover, 1967). Secondly, (2) the greater the discrepancy between a person's actual and ideal self, the greater the likelihood that he has a low self-concept. It is assumed that if one aspires to an ideal which is considerably higher from what one conceives to be his actual self, he is in effect expressing feelings of inadequacy. Thirdly, (3) lower class persons tend to be more creative due to less pressures for conformity (Jersild, 1965), due to adventurous thinking

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* For one of the best sources of research on creativity, see Gowan, John C., Annotated Bibliography on Creativity and Giftedness. Northridge, Calif.: San Fernando Valley State College Foundation, 1965.

(Bartlett, 1959) and due to the frequent use of fantasy as a form of solace (Jersild, 1962, p. 151). Fourthly, (4) persons who tend to be more fluent, flexible, original and elaborate are likely to be more creative (Torrance, 1962, p.72).

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted of 40 students from a middle class background (M group) and 27 students from a lower class background (L group). The two groups, one located in a slum area and the other in a middle class neighborhood, were in two different schools in a California medium-sized town. The average income of the parents of the lower class group was below $3,000, whereas all the parents' income of the middle class group was considerably higher, ranging from $7,000 to $22,000. There were 23 girls and 17 boys in the M group and 15 girls and 12 boys in the L group. The sample consisted of two 5th and 6th grade combination classes. The ages of the two groups ranged from 11 to 12 years old.

Procedure

The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, Figural Form A, was used to assess originality, elaboration, flexibility, fluency and a sum score of creativity. The Figural Form was selected because it seemed more appropriate to use with students from low socioeconomic levels who are verbally handicapped. A Self-Referent questionnaire consisting of 50 items was developed relying on Segal (1954) and Quimby (1964). A pilot study of this test was done using a group of middle and lower class 5th and 6th graders resulting in a revision of this questionnaire, reducing the items to 34 and making the statements more relevant to the students. For each statement, the student had to answer "yes" or "no" under the categories "I am" and "I would like to be."

The questionnaire is scored by counting the "yes" responses in each of the categories; two scores were yielded -- one for the actual self, "I am," the other for the ideal self, "I would like to be." The TTCT and SRQ were administered the same day with the help of the teacher during class periods. Directions were read by the teacher and questions from the students were answered. Whenever a student was unable to read or comprehend the directions, the teacher or investigator sat down with the child and helped clarify the statement to him. There was no time limit on completing either of the tests. The students were also encouraged to be responsive by indicating to them that neither of the tests would have any relevance to their grades in the classroom.

RESULTS

The data obtained from both the TTCT and the SRQ were tabulated and analyzed for possible correlations and significance of differences. The analysis yielded the following findings: (1) As shown in Table I, the M group scored significantly higher on actual self-concept ($p < .001$) than the L group. (2) The former group showed also significantly ($p < .001$) less discrepancy between their actual and ideal self scores than the latter group. An inverse relationship was found between the actual self and the degree of discrepancy between the actual and the ideal self (M group: $r = -.862$; L group: $r = -.846$)

TABLE I

Actual and Ideal Self-Concepts of Middle and Lower Class Children

	Mean Actual Self	Mean Ideal Self	Mean Actual-Ideal Self Discrepancy
M group (n=32)	25.73*	30.76	5.20
L group (n=28)	20.70*	29.03	8.96

* $p = .001$

(3) As shown in Table II, the L group scored significantly higher ($p < .001$) on fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration and sum score for creativity.

TABLE II

Creativity of Middle and Lower Class

	Mean Creativity (Σ of all scores)	Mean Fluency	Mean Flexibility	Mean Originality	Mean Elaboration
M group	68.68	15.58	12.17	19.56	22.46
L group	104.00	17.52	14.22	22.70	49.55

(4) In relation to Table III, significant positive correlations were found between creativity and each of these: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

TABLE III

Correlations Between Creativity and Fluency, Flexibility, Originality and Elaboration of Lower and Middle Class Children

L group	Fluency	Flexibility	Originality	Elaboration
Creativity	.831866	.836073	.835886	.900169
Fluency		.915563	.799038	.557271
Flexibility	.915563		.824729	.558756
Originality	.799038	.824729		.558405
Elaboration	.557271	.558756	.558405	
M group				
Creativity	.950296	.838730	.790448	
Fluency		.762541	.654586	
Flexibility	.762541		.662929	
Originality	.654586	.662929		

DISCUSSION

Research, such as the study by Brookover and Thomas (1964), show that one's self-concept is related to one's academic achievement in school. Hence, the determination of a student's self-concept takes on a greater importance than ever before in the classroom. From the findings of study shown above, it is interesting to note that lower class children in the sample had a greater discrepancy between what they conceive themselves to be (actual self-concept) and what they would like to be (ideal self-concept). According to the first finding, the lower class children tended also to have a lower self-concept than the middle class children. The relationship between these two hypotheses is quite evident.

Several studies have pointed out possible clues as to why lower class children have lower self-concepts. Because they have a lower scholastic motivation, a lower level of general aspiration, a home environment which is not conducive to academic learning and a general impoverished environment, they usually encounter greater difficulties in the school than their middle class counterparts.

For a long time the American school has been seen as a middle class institution. Middle class children who came to such a school with a respective value orientation tend to find less difficulty in getting ahead of the lower class children whose cultural background is different. Most American teachers who have come from middle class society, accept and reward those children who behave according to middle class norms, and reject and punish those who deviate from these norms. Therefore, it is conceivable that middle class teachers tend to favor middle class students over lower class children, thereby contributing to the formation of higher self-concepts in the former and lower self-concepts in the latter. Self-concept has been shown to be significantly and positively related to the perceived evaluation of significant others (Brookover and Thomas, 1967). Among the significant others, teachers form an important group.

As for creativity, its nature has been the focus of attention for many psychologists and educators. Torrance has analyzed creativity in terms of four factors: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration. The findings from the present study concur with his assumption. The highest correlation found was between creativity and elaboration ($r = .90$) indicating that imagination and exposition of detail is a direct function of creative ability (Torrance, 1962). There were also high correlations between the other factors implying that these are indeed aspects of creative ability.

The most important finding of the study is that lower class children scored significantly higher on all aspects of creativity than middle class children. This can be interpreted in many ways. It is possible that middle class children live in a more structured milieu and are pressured to conform more than their lower class counterparts. Conversely, lower class children have more hours of unstructured leisure time, and are often left alone to create their own play. For instance, while the middle class is taught structured games or is given highly structured toys to play with, a lower class child only may have cardboard boxes and an imagination with which to create. Through unstructured play, the lower class child is given the opportunity to develop his creative ability.

Perhaps this dichotomy between the middle class knack for structure of leisure time, the lower class unstructured play is no better illustrated than in the following excerpt from a paper of a college student from a lower class background.

> "I think some of our best times were spent playing street football, baseball, kick-the-can, but whatever we did, we organized or created it ourselves. We used to play ball in an old vacant lot. There were big kids, skinny kids, crippled kids, and ordinary kids that used to play there, until one day one of those dirty, slimy little leagues started taking over. I remember sloppy, fat, pallid businessmen that wanted to be buddies to their sons instead of fathers. They organized the little league for their bubble gum sons. They said I could play, but my friend Max couldn't play anymore because he was crippled, and the game had to be taken seriously. The other third of my friends couldn't play because they were girls. I told them to shove it!" (Gezi and Myers, 1968.)

A replication of this study would be of great value in order to discover whether or not the findings were characteristic of this particular sample only or of a larger population. Although no relationship was found between creativity and self-concept, a replication may find such a relationship.

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